

**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
**USDA Satellite Features Feed**  
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**Contact: USDA-TV (202) 720-6445 or (202) 720-3319**

**FEATURE – RAIN GARDENS PREVENT RUNOFF AND HELP TEACH**

INTRO: The wife of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack visited a Washington, D-C school to dedicate a new rain garden designed to prevent runoff. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more.  
(1:37)

THE RAIN GARDEN AT BRENT ELEMENTARY IN WASHINGTON, D-C WILL HELP FILTER STORM WATER RUNOFF BEFORE IT REACHES AREA WATER SYSTEMS. CHRISTIE VILSACK, WIFE OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK, HELPED DEDICATE THE RAIN GARDEN INSTALLED BY A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE AND D-C GOVERNMENT.

Christie Vilsack, Wife of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack: Well it creates a beautiful filter really. It's very attractive to look at. But it filters out all of the bad stuff in the rainwater, whether it's pollutants or whether it's trash, or whatever it is, and it filters it out so that when the water runs into the Anacostia River that it's pure. And you know when you're on hills, like Capitol Hill, the water rushes down the hill and it takes a lot of stuff that shouldn't go into the river with it.

Dave White, USDA NRCS Chief: Well this rain garden is really an ecosystem unto itself. It captures all of the runoff water from this school and its grounds. And when the water leaves this school grounds it is purified. What Brent Elementary School is putting into eventually the Chesapeake Bay is clean water.

IN ADDITION TO FILTERING RUNOFF, THE RAIN GARDEN WILL HELP STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.

Christie Vilsack: When you plant a seed this early in their lives then they'll watch that grow as these kids go off and start their own gardens and understand the importance of conservation.

White: They are so knowledgeable about what this rain garden is, what it does and what it means. So it's really a tribute to the public education system that these kids are getting this kind of information.

THE RAIN GARDEN IS PART OF A LARGER U-S-D-A EFFORT PROMOTING COMMUNITY GARDENS. IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.